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(previously Roman Szancer)

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On September 6, 1939 I was a resident Olkusch, Poland. I lived at Pilsudski Place 14. It was on the above date that the German Army occupied our town. With me at the above address were my parents, two sisters, and two brothers. One sister is yet alive. My occupation was that of a barber.

With the occupation came a scarcity of food which required our waiting in long lines for food which we had no assurances of obtaining. It was necessary for us to get into line at three a.m. when the stores actually opened at eight a.m. After a couple of weeks we were issued food cards which allotted us very meager portions to live on, but we managed.

Once while walking with two friends a German policeman by name of Offerman stopped us and beat us because we were not supposed to go in groups. As a result I was hospitalized for a period of three weeks.

In the earlier part of 1940 all of the Jews were required, by order of the German mayor of the city, to move into the ghetto. It was extremely difficult to secure an apartment and no family could get more than a single room. While in the ghetto I worked in a barber shop and once while shaving a customer a German policeman named Scholz accosted us and beat us so long he actually broke his rifle!

We had a Jewish president in the ghetto whose name was Sobel. His secretary's name was Czernecki. The head of the Jewish police was Gleitman.

~~On September 14~~ March, 1940 the Jewish Committee had orders from the German government to deliver 300 young Jewish males from the ghetto. I turned out to be one of them. Although there was an order from the committee for me to come in and register I could not be located immediately. When I could not be found my mother and sister were arrested and held until I would show up. If I failed they would be sent away. With my arrival my mother and sister were released.

The next day found us shipped out to Sosnowiec in the durchgangslager where we were held for four days. We were then shipped out in groups and I was sent to RAB lager, Sakrau by Gogolin in lower Silesia, Germany. We arrived on the 18th of March, 1940. On the next day we were placed at work on the RAB.

RAB. REICHS-AUTO-BAHN.

I used to work at shoveling sand and dirt, breaking up stones, etc. We were required to walk eight miles each way. ~~We were required to walk eight miles each way.~~

~~We were required to walk eight miles each way.~~ We marched out in groups of 50, 60, or 70 and under Jewish supervision. At the gate the German OT took over. *we were not permitted to leave that camp with out German supervision*
The Jewish supervisors were Waldman, Feller, and Cohen.

In Sakrau we were required to cut sections out of our uniform in the front and back and insert a yellow Star of David labelled 'Jude'. In 1942 in June those of us at Sakrau were grouped with others brought in from Niederkirchen and Annaberg. From Sakrau we all went to Gogolin. All of us worked on the same RAB but each camp was separated by a ten mile area.

While at Sakrau one of the men was caught trying to mail a letter home which depicted how miserable our lot really was. As a result all of us were deprived of our bread rations for a period of two days.

In the same month of June I was shipped from Gogolin to Markstadt along with 1000 others. Markstadt is located near Ohlau which is a short distance from Breslau. This was a ZAL camp. At this time the entire camp was made up of ten barracks. ~~I lived in block no. three.~~

Three days later we were put to work. My first job here was at digging sewers for the Prestel Co., Inc. Upon our arrival on the first day's work there were fields which grew potatoes, corn, etc. After a couple of months my job was changed and I was put in a different company. The name of this company was called Grün and Bülfunger. It was at this time that we started building Krupp's factories. Our work situation here was very difficult. We had to walk four miles to work and our work itself was concerned with distributing the cement used for construction. I had to carry bags of cement and heavy pipes.

The German bosses on the job were horrible. We usually worked from ~~six~~ *seven* in the morning until six at night. Sometimes we even worked night shifts. The following were names of some of the German bosses: Hyla, Wagner, Wenger.

Once while helping construct the foundation I fell from a twelve foot height while carrying some of these heavy pipes. A heavy pipe landed on my leg and I was incapacitated for a four week period. While in the camp hospital some of the nurses (Male) whom I knew helped me back to recovery. There was Dr. Schternberg, and nurses Bergman, Sznycer, and Rosenbaum. *these were Jewish prisoners.*

O.T. ORGANIZATION-Todt
ZAL. Zwangs-arbeits-Lager

All during this time the SS was on the scene picking out people who were thought to be weakening. These people were sent to the crematorium. The crematorium was located at Kozel which is near Breslau. Fortunately I was restored to health.

When I returned to work my German supervisors were Regular Army soldiers most of whom had been wounded at the front. The Jewish supervisor in the camp was named Boruch Meister, but we had other supervisors who were subordinate to Meister. These subordinates were responsible for taking the lives of a goodly number of our people. Following are some of their names: Machtinger, Bosak, Sztark, and Teitelbaum. My job was changed again and I worked for Scholhorn Co.

The Markstadt camp was fenced in by electrically charged wires and the Regular Army soldiers stood guard in towers posted about the camp. In this camp most of us wore the old black OT uniforms which also were adorned with the Star of David in both the front and back. I remained in the Markstadt camp until APRIL of 1944.

Then about 3500 of us were taken to Funftaichen ~~on a train to a hillside walk. We were forced to carry a chair over our head for the entire distance and we could not take any of our personal belongings, food, or anything save the clothes on our back.~~

This new camp was a K.Z.L., a division of Gross-Rosen. We were placed five in a row and marched passed the SS men who were counting us. It so happened that one of the men in my line happened to get out of step. One of the SS men was disturbed at this and decided to take out his fury on me since I was at the extreme right end of the line. He kicked me at the base of the spine and succeeded in breaking a number of bones. To this very day I am plagued by the after-effects of the injury.

This camp was made up of 32 barracks and I was assigned to barrack 28 ~~which was the last barrack~~. The supervisor of this ~~barrack~~ was Kanerguser, and his assistant was Schynagel. This camp was also surrounded by electrically charged wires and was manned by SS men in the towers. To the right of the camp entrance were four barracks which constituted the hospital. Some of the doctors who were prisoners were Zabramny, Lotesch, Hegedesch, and Schternberg.

K.Z.L. KONZENTRATION-LAGER

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While at Funftaichen I was further subjected to cruel treatment at the hands of the Germans. I came down with a rather severe case of frostbite of the toes and chin. At first I hesitated to report to the hospital because I knew what would happen if it were a bad case; they would send me to the crematorium within a short time. However, the frostbite got worse and I had to report to the hospital. When I got to the hospital my treatment consisted of a beating at the hands of the hospital supervisor and told to go back to the barracks and to work. The wooden shoes I wore did not help matters any and after a couple of days my feet continued to get worse. The striped clothing I wore was very inadequate and I was compelled to go to the hospital once again. I stayed at the hospital for ten days and when I began to show improvement they sent me back to work.

I returned to work at Grunand Bulfinger. We had a number of different supervisors. The SS supervisor on the day shift was Waserico; the night shift SS supervisor was Banchuk. Our camp supervisor was named "Killer" Jozek, a Pole, who was also a prisoner. He was responsible for the death of perhaps hundreds of prisoners. During the winter he would throw prisoners into the swimming pool and as they attempted to get out he would kick them in the head and step on their hands. He would do this for hours at a time until his sadistic energies were spent.

Another incident concerned a man named Rosenthal who allegedly had connections with the Polish underground. Once he disappeared for two days and was picked up by the SS in Breslau and brought back to the camp. When we returned from work we found him tied down to a lamppost. We were forced, all of us, to strike him quite hard. As might be expected one of the men did not strike him with full force. The net result was the entire group being deprived of food for one day.

At still another time we were working night shift when two Ukrainians escaped. When we returned we were not allowed to return to the barracks until we worked still longer. We were finally permitted two hours sleep and then put back to work again for another night shift.

We remained at Funftaichen until January of 1945. The Russians ^{army} were pushing further west and closer and closer to us. The SS decided to take us to Gross Rossen. We were put to a forced march on a day and night basis. Our only sleep came on the snow outside. We had very little food and not much more water. After a couple of days we arrived at our destination. En route we lost hundreds of prisoners. We buried them in the woods.

In Gross Rossen we were barracked next door to the crematorium which worked day and night. The stench was unbearable. In front of the crematorium could always be seen hundreds of corpses due to hunger, beatings, etc.

We remained at this site for only three weeks and we were the last ones to leave this camp. We were last to leave because we were apparently of least material value. We lived in the quarantined section and the healthy prisoners were moved out first.

Before leaving the camp the SS found some of the prisoners hiding. They were quickly rounded up and shot to death. One of these victims was a close friend. I remember the names of some of these people: Kolatacz, Mirowski, and Smical.

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From Gross Rossen we were taken ~~to a train of 3000~~ to the railroad station. We were loaded into open coal trains and taken to Herzbruck, near Neurenburg. After a couple of days in these trains our group was considerably reduced in number. People died like flies. We were given no food or water. We piled the dead one on top of the other so as to make room for us to stand all the way. We stopped in Dresden and the German Red Cross refused to give us any help saying they didn't help prisoners or Jews. We had to sit and sleep on the dead. Most of us nearly froze to death. The train stopped only five minutes from the camp.

~~They counted the remaining survivors which now numbered 1000.~~ Each of us was required to take dead persons by a hand or leg and we thus made a human chain of alternating live and dead persons. In this way we dragged the dead into the camp.

Conditions in our current barracks were unbearable.

Water seeped through cracks in the wall and we were extremely fortunate to get a blanket. Generally other prisoners organized to steal the blankets from us during the night. If we protested we were badly beaten.

At this camp I was sent to work at Happburg, a distance of five miles from the camp. We dug into the mountains and rumor had it that mountains were being dug out for construction of factories. This lasted four weeks. I was then sent to work in Nuernburg.

We had to travel daily from Herzbruck every morning at four a.m. partly by train, partly by foot. The station and tracks were mostly bombed out by the U.S. planes. This happened almost every day. We worked on the tracks filling in the holes with sand and dirt and then connecting the tracks. At noon we got our lunch -- a three pound bread for ten men. This lasted thirty minutes and we went back to work. We got back to Herzbruck around ten p.m.

After six weeks in Herzbruck I was put in barrack no. 3. We had a very tough supervisor and were forced to sleep four in a bed with one blanket. ⁸² The supervisor's name was Ingster. Another one was Huger. The Nuernburg supervisor was Sielcki. We were required to bathe before being admitted to the barracks but the washrooms had no water. We had to wade through mud to reach a pump. We could not wash with our clothes on despite the fact that it was winter and the water was ice cold. If we were caught doing it with clothing we were beaten with clubs at least twenty-five times.

The entire camp was floundering in mud and we had to walk on narrow wooden planks or through the mud. We used to throw gravel into the mud so as to make it more bearable. This camp was a division of Flossenburg.

After eleven weeks here we were shipped to Dachau and here I again met up with some of my friends. It was April of 1945 when we came to Dachau. The sign on the camp entrance read "Arbeit Macht Free." When we entered we were required to disrobe and submit to barbers who shaved all of our hair. We had to shower with ice-cold water. All during this time I expected to die via gas which I thought would come from the showers rather than water. Fortunately it was water that came through. Those of us who didn't pass the inspection had to go through the process all over again. We had to walk through

the camp in this state of nudity. We were covered with a liquid in all areas where shaving was done. This was applied with a brush. We then had to walk in this condition to barracks 26 which was quarantined for sick people. Barracks 22, 24, and 28 were also quarantined.

I stayed in this barrack until the day of liberation. While here we were given no clothing for a week and even then only a blanket. We had very little food and prisoners died by the hundreds every day as a result of typhus. A special prisoner ~~one~~ ^{Comando} told me that the place was overflowing with dead and that space was no longer available for the dead. They had no room for burning the prisoners and the bodies were stacked outside. Dachau, by Munich, was so full that the SS took many of the prisoners to Tyrol and there executed them. Usually they were Jews, Russians, Poles, and Bohemians.

A description of Dachau follows. To the right of the gate was the bathhouse and the kitchen. Also, the point at which we were issued our striped uniforms. To the left of the entrance was our barracks. Beyond the barracks was the crematorium. At the time of the arrival of the U. S. Army there were many hundreds of dead piled up.

My liberation by the Americans came on Sunday afternoon, April 29, 1945. The U. S. 3rd and 7th armies accomplished this. At this time I was very ill, weighing only 90 pounds and afflicted with typhus. The SS came down from their watchtowers carrying the white flag of surrenders. We tried to get out of the quarantine but the risk was too great. We got more food from the U. S. armies, but my condition deteriorated nevertheless and I was taken to the hospital. I was unconscious for two days I am told. After four weeks internment at the hospital I was released, the early part of June. I can recall how the camp was surrounded by electrically charged wires and SS men posted in the towers were always on the alert. A river ran through the camp near its entrance.

Upon release I moved to the quarters formerly held by the SS. I then moved to a DP camp at Landsberg Am Lech. Towards the end of 1945 I moved to Selb Stadt where I resided until 1948. I next went to Stuttgart where I resided until April, 1949 when I left for the United States.